

# I Am a Follower of Christ

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Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     So let's open up the scriptures tonight and find 1 Corinthians chapter 11. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and we're still looking at our Apostle Paul and seeing the things that he says, I am.

And the last time we were together, we looked back in chapter 9 and saw where he said that I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

And so we took a study of what it is to be made all things to all men. And after the service, Mark comes and tells me, hey, that's like the perfect speech for sales, for a sales pitch or for, what did you say, for, yeah, training.

And I thought about it, I'm like, yeah, all the points really match really well for like a motivational speech to everybody to get out there and sell something. But it's the same. We're not selling, but we're preaching the gospel and trying to convince men that they need Christ.

So, all right. So, yeah, of course it should match. That makes a lot of sense. All right. So, we're in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and just start verse number 1. Let's take a look at the Bible.

[ 1 : 1 9 ]     It says, be ye followers of me, even as I also am. There's the I am. I also am of Christ.

So, what's Paul saying that he is? He's saying that I am a follower of Christ. And he commands and compels believers to follow him.

He's our apostle. Paul has the right. You might say Paul has the authority to make such a statement to tell us to follow him. But there's reasons for this. So, let's come back.

You can, I guess you have to keep your place there necessarily. But look back at chapter number 4. 1 Corinthians chapter 4. And here he gives the same talk but a little more light and context why he would say this.

1 Corinthians 4. Look at verse number 14. I write not these things to shame you but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have 10,000 instructors in Christ yet have ye not many fathers.

[ 2 : 2 9 ]     For in Christ Jesus I, Paul says, I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you be ye followers of me. So, you've got 10,000 instructors in Christ.

And that's probably, you know, a bit sarcastic to them. But the idea is everybody wants to get their voice heard. Everybody has a thought. Or in this church specifically later he says everybody has a word.

Everybody has a psalm or some prophecy or something. Everybody wants to run their mouth. And he told them to cut it out and do it decently in an order. That's this church. So, they all have 10,000 instructors in Christ but he's saying, I'm the one that begot you through the gospel.

So, don't you think you ought to be following me instead of just everybody else and what they say? Am I not the reason, Paul says, that you're born again and in Christ?

And he continues in verse 17 saying, Paul's ways, my ways which be in Christ.

[ 3 : 41 ] That's key. Because he's following Christ and commanding these believers to follow him. So, you could almost say, Paul's saying, follow Christ and I'm going to lead the way.

But as far as the I am goes, Paul says, I am a follower of Jesus Christ. So, he commands us to follow him on the condition or maybe on the basis that he himself is following Jesus Christ.

And that's a safe place to be because you can follow anybody that's following Christ. As long as they're following Christ, you can stick with them. If they deviate from following Jesus Christ, then you've got a choice to make.

You've got to follow them, you're going to stick with Jesus Christ. As long as Paul's following Christ, we can follow him. Now, this brings up a thought and I don't want to spend a lot of time with it but just touch on it.

There's a stone that's been hurled at believers or various believers through, well, centuries. More than that. Millennia, perhaps even.

[ 4 : 41 ] And the thought is that, well, you're following a man. You're a man worshiper. You're following a man. And this stone gets hurled when somebody has a problem with a particular doctrine or belief.

And they say, well, that came from this man. And since you believe that too, you stand with that position. Therefore, you're following a man. And it's kind of a cop-out in some ways.

Attempt to belittle somebody and put you into a category. And that category, if it's a doctrine that a man came up with and it's wrong, well, then you are following a man.

And there's religious verification of this through the history of the church of people getting off the track of the word of God and following a man. And we could spend the night talking about how many of those there are.

But where somebody is right with the Bible and a man teaches this and somebody doesn't like it, well, then they kind of throw a stone at you and say, you're following that guy. The one that I know of in my lifetime is you're a Ruckmanite.

[ 5 : 44 ] That is, if you believe the Bible, this King James Bible to be the word of God, and it's the best thing there is, you believe it from cover to cover, well, then you're a Ruckmanite, they say.

And that's just one maybe some of you are familiar with, but there's many others. Now, you can follow a man as long as he's following Christ. You can follow a man if he's following the word of God.

If a man gets off track, you can't go off track with him. But let's talk about the Apostle Paul tonight being a follower of Christ. Because I want to say this, and I hope you hear this clearly, and it sinks in and it makes sense to you that not every believer is a follower of Christ.

Not every believer in Jesus Christ is actually a follower of Jesus Christ. That should make sense to you. I mean, I think you should just understand that without me explaining it. Because it's very possible, rather it's probably very common, that somebody trusts Jesus Christ as their Savior and gets their get out of hell free pass and feels like this is pretty good.

But before long, they're right back in their life of sin. They're walking in the flesh and living their life to the lust of their flesh. They're unseparated from the world, unseparated from believers.

[ 7 : 00 ] Are they a follower of Jesus Christ because they've named the name of Christ for their salvation? There's a difference. And it doesn't mean they're not going to heaven when they die.

It just means they're not a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not any more than anybody else that gets saved and then just falls into sin. I would never say they're not saved.

Some people would say they're not saved. And I can't judge their heart. I can't judge whether their soul was born again by the Lord Jesus Christ or whether they're just imagining things.

But not every follower, not every believer is a follower of Jesus Christ. Christ came up to certain men in his life and he said, follow me. And some of them left all.

They forsook their nets and things like that and they followed him. And some followed him for a point and then when he said some things they didn't understand or they weren't so sure that just didn't set well with him, it says that some of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

[ 8 : 00 ] And so there's people that have walked with Jesus Christ. There's people that have walked away from Jesus Christ. And today is no different. So not every believer is a follower. But we want to talk about somebody who will be a follower of Jesus Christ.

And Paul is our example. Paul is a follower of Christ. And he compels us and commands us to follow him as well. So let's look at a few things tonight. Whereas we can be a follower of Christ.

Flip back to Acts chapter 9. And let's, you know, where else to begin but where it began with Paul. And let's just take a look at the very beginning of Paul.

And make a quick point here. Of his beginning and how he shows us to be a follower of Christ. And how we can therefore follow his example and be followers of Christ as well.

Acts chapter 9. And you've heard me preach on this before. So I'll just point out the thought here.

[ 8 : 57 ] When the apostle Paul, or his name is Saul at the time. And he's on his way to persecute Christians. And to bring them back to Jerusalem to get tried. And to get thrown in prison. Perhaps even get executed for what he considers blasphemy.

And for sin against their religion. He's going after them. And then he runs into the Lord Jesus Christ. And verse number 3. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus. And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

And he fell to the earth. And heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And verse 6. He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And then the Lord gave him instructions of what he wanted him to do.

And Saul, guess what he did? He did it. He followed him. He followed the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the first thing I see about Saul from the very beginning. Is that he followed Christ by surrendering.

[ 9 : 59 ] Right there. Just cold turkey. First meeting. What do you want me to do? And it took a... His life took a dramatic turn in that moment.

And as we read through these... His own epistles that he wrote. His own biography, if you want to call it that. In a sense. We read of a man who still traveled. That was...

That didn't change. Still very zealous. That didn't change at all. But he's under different orders now. And in his epistles we read about a sold out soldier.

A man that is not intimidated by any man anywhere. At all. He's got orders from Jesus Christ. And he's following them. And he's completely surrendered.

This man is convinced by God that he needs to go. That he needs to preach the gospel. That he needs to minister to the Gentiles all over the region. And so he does that.

[ 10 : 55 ] That was his commission. And Paul surrendered to it. And by the end of his life he's able to say these words. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course.

Those are some powerful thoughts. I want to get to the end of my life and have that. And have a clear conscience. And say I did what God told me to do. But that's only going to happen if you're surrendered.

What Paul could have did. What a lot of Christians are going to do. When they're on their death bed. Because they never surrendered. Is they're going to say oh I wish I would have done more. Oh I wish I wasn't so distracted.

I wish I wasn't so consumed with these stinking material things. That I'm not taking with me. But the apostle Paul showed us how to be surrendered. From the very beginning. And in surrender to Christ.

There are some things that he had to let go of. And I want to show you that too. You'll flip over to Philippians chapter 3. Moving to your right. Find the book of Philippians. And find chapter 3.

[ 11 : 59 ] Paul followed Christ by surrendering. From the very beginning. What wilt thou have me to do? He asked the Lord. And in his surrender to Jesus Christ.

He had to let go of some things. Philippians chapter 3. I am just going to read two verses here. Verses 7 and 8. Before he talks about his credentials.

In verses 4, 5 and 6. But by verse 7 he says. But what things were gained to me. Those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless. I count all things but loss.

For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things. And do count them but dung.

That I may win Christ. So he states to us here in this passage. A little kind of a. Just a life synopsis of what he's. What he was. To how he just dumped all of it.

[ 13 : 02 ] For the will of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus. And he states that. He gave up on his old life. And all those things that he had achieved. And you'd have to study it.

And really consider it. That this guy. Wasn't just. Some little. You know. Altar boy. He doesn't. Wasn't just a Sunday school kid. He had really. Gotten somewhere.

But he realized. I can't follow Christ. And surrender to Christ. And hold on to my past. And so he had to let go of it. He let go of some things. One of the things was his reputation.

Or his. You might call it his status. Because he had clout. And again. I'm not going to cover it out. Out in the scriptures. But he was a Pharisee. The son of a Pharisee. He was hand picked.

And trained. And moving up in the. The rank so to speak. In the Jews religion. In the Jews religion. He. What's the term? He. Something above all his equals.

[ 13 : 57 ] What did he say? He profited in the Jews religion. Above all mine equals. He said. And he was a young man at that time. In Acts chapter 7. As a young man. He has already risen through the ranks.

And had a. Had a voice with the high priest. Or the chief priest even. I mean. He's no joke. He was being groomed for a position. He had status. And he dropped it.

When he surrendered to Christ. He just dropped it. He dropped his past. He dropped some relationships. With some people. Who were Christ rejecters. He himself was a Christ rejecter.

Now he's a Christ believer. And so he dropped those relationships. Back in Acts chapter 9. Those are the people that were going about. Seeking to kill him. More than once.

Those Jews were after his hide. The ones that he ran with. Are now after him. So he must have dropped those relationships. Paul surrendered. To Jesus Christ.

[ 14 : 51 ] And let go of some things. He also let go of security. Now you could say. Well he's trusting God. He's secure in Christ. I would say so yes. But at the same time. The majority of this Christian life.

As he describes it. Was lived out in peril. Lots of it. We'll take a look at it later on. But numerous times. As he followed Christ. He found out. That he had to let go.

Of that comfortable. Secure. Living. Surrendering means. You have to let go of some things. Surrendering means. You have to let go of. All things. If you really surrendered.

Here's a song. That is in this hymnal. I love the song. All to Jesus. I surrender. All to him. I freely give.

I will ever love. And trust him. In his presence. Daily live. All to Jesus. I surrender. Humbly at his feet.

[ 15 : 49 ] I bow. Worldly pleasures. All forsaken. Take me Jesus. Take me now. Because I surrender. All.

That's surrender. That's following Christ. And that's following Paul. As he followed Christ. By surrendering. Now. It's unfortunate. But.

You don't have a whole lot of good examples. To look to anymore. These days. In this category. You got a whole lot of worldly Christians. To look at. And they have the hardest time. With this thing. Of surrender. And of just.

Of letting everything go. To the Lord Jesus Christ. Laying their life at his feet. And putting their self. On the altar. Of sacrifice. Counting all things in this life.

As dung. As if it's worthless to me. As if it's refuse. As if. I refuse. These things. They. They. I'd rather receive. What Christ has for me.

[ 16 : 47 ] Than to. Be chasing. These worldly pleasures. And desires. And yet. So many are consumed. With. What's in it for them. I'm saved. But what's in it for me.

If I come out. To your outreach. If I go knock on a few doors. Or play some door hangers. What's in it for me. I'm not really that interested. Because. I get nervous. Or. It'll be hot out.

Or. It'll hurt my feet. Or. Me. Me. Me. And the apostle Paul. He's just. He's surrendered. We'll read it again. I'll read it later. But.

You don't want to stand. In front of the apostle Paul. And have to. You don't want him near you. When you give a count. And say. Well. I didn't. Want to. Put those door hangers out. Because I thought it might hurt my feet.

He might. He might in the flesh. Just reach out. And slap you across the face. For saying that. Yeah. He might want to do that. If he doesn't. I will.

[ 17 : 43 ] No. I'll do it here. But no. You get what I'm trying to say though. You know what that man's been through. For Jesus Christ. And you can't. Deal with. My feet might hurt. Or I might get a little sweaty.

And my makeup might run. Do you hear yourself. Do you think that way though. Do you think that way. When it comes to surrendering. Or are you surrendered. Because Paul says to us.

Hey believer. Follow me. I'm following Christ. So come on. Follow me. Let me show you how to surrender. Because Paul's completely surrendered.

To the calling of Jesus Christ. Something else Paul did. You're going to have to get two places. We're going to compare this. Go back to Acts chapter 9. And then you're also going to want to find.

Galatians chapter 1. I want to put these two passages together. And make a little comparison here. That can just reveal something to us.

[ 18 : 41 ] About his following Christ. Here's another one that worldly Christians have a hard time with.

First one's surrendering. This one. Look at Acts chapter 9. And a little bit later from where we were. We'll start in verse 18. This is just after his conversion.

He receives his sight. A few days later in verse 18. It says. And immediately there fell from his eyes that it had been scales. And he received sight forthwith. And arose and was baptized.

And when he had received meat. He was strengthened. Period. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples. Which were at Damascus. And it describes him preaching in the synagogues.

And people are amazed. And verse 22 says. But Saul increased the more in strength. And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus. Proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled.

[ 19 : 42 ] The Jews took counsel to kill him. And a little bit later in verse 26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem. So do you see this happening here? That he is at Damascus.

He's just converted. He's strengthened. He's spending time with the disciples. Then he gets busy with them. He's preaching. And he's there many days it says. Okay. Now then he goes to Jerusalem.

Flip back to Galatians 1. And let's compare something here. As he kind of recalls the same time period. Galatians 1.

I'm going to start all the way back in verse 11. Where he tells us how he received some revelation from Christ. Verse 11. But I certify you brethren. That the gospel which was preached of me.

Is not after man. For I neither received it of man. Neither was I taught it. But by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Question. When did he get that revelation?

[ 20 : 39 ] Keep reading. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion. How that I brought beyond measure I persecuted the church of God. And wasted it. And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals.

In mine own nation. Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb. And called me by his grace to reveal his son in me.

That I might preach him among the heathen. Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me. But here it comes.

I went into Arabia. And returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.

Now there's three years that for all we know he spent in Damascus or in, now we learn of, Arabia. There's three years or more than three years of his life that are not clearly accounted for.

[ 21 : 42 ] Just kind of brushed by back there in the book of Acts. And then we get, he mentions a little bit about it here in Galatians chapter one. So from his conversion to him going to Jerusalem and meeting the disciples.

He mentions that Jesus Christ revealed some things to him. Especially to him. Things that nobody else, no flesh and blood taught him.

Man did not teach him the things that he learned from Jesus Christ. It's possible that it was in Arabia. Some speculate that he was forty days and forty nights in the mount like Moses was.

Others speculate ninety days somewhere isolated. But nobody knows for sure, at least not that I can tell. Nobody's given any better light than what we have right here.

But he's getting revelation with Jesus Christ. He's spending time with the disciples of the Lord. Not at Jerusalem, but the ones that are up there in Damascus.

[ 22 : 42 ] And what am I saying? I'm saying before Paul was a preacher, Paul was a student. Paul had to learn some things. And Paul was a follower of Jesus Christ.

First of all, by surrendering. Second, by studying. By studying. And he devoted a whole lot of his upbringing. We know this already. A whole lot of his upbringing was devoted to the study of the Old Testament scriptures.

There's no doubt that he was very, very familiar with those Old Testament scriptures. He had a great foundation, but he was blind when he was reading those scriptures. The veil was on his eyes, as he says later in 2 Corinthians 3.

And it was on his heart. So he really didn't get what he was reading. It was just knowledge and facts and a foundation, sure. But then he got a Bible lesson like nobody else got, I'm sure.

And I'm going to guess it was out there in Arabia in a meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation. Things coming to him, his eyes being opened to what that Old Testament was about and who it was about.

[ 23 : 46 ] And all the types and the pictures and the truth of God through that Old Testament. And then he comes back and he starts writing letters to these churches saying that that law is done away in Christ.

And he tells them that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. He got his eyes open to some things. But before he was a preacher, he was a student.

And Paul says, follow me because I'm following Christ by studying. By learning of a new way, a better way. By learning God's ways.

You know, it's true that one thing some Christians lack today, a lot of Christians lack today, is Bible knowledge. It is so, so sad and so, so true that so few Christians actually know their Bible, spend time in their Bible.

All they know about the world, you know, entertainment figures and movie stars and celebrities and who's going who, who's buried what and all that stuff. They know the scores. They know the leaders.

[ 24 : 51 ] They know the politicians. They know the policies. But could they show you a chapter and verse on something that they believe is right? If they say, I'm going to vote for this candidate because he believes in this.

And you say, well, can you show me a Bible reason why that's something you should believe in? Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh. Oh, separation of church and state. It's a great little way to get out of that one.

Christians are sadly not students of the Bible. They're lazy. Jesus Christ said to people that try to bring a quote-unquote Bible question to him, he said, ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

And you too, Christian, you will err if you don't know the scriptures. I'm not telling you you've got to quote them. I'm not telling you you've got to be able to just find that spot, find that verse.

But you understand what I mean. You ought to have your nose in this Bible. One of the greatest things any Christian can do for themselves is study the scriptures. Not because they're called to preach, not because they feel God wants me to be on the mission field, but for yourself is study the scriptures.

[ 26 : 05 ] Get familiar with this holy book. Learn the books. Learn where they're at. Learn the doctrine. Have a hunger for the Bible. I know I'm preaching to the choir a little bit here.

You're here on Wednesday night. You showed up to get some Bible. So praise the Lord for that. But you do know that you're in a dry and thirsty land. You know you're in a place where folks could care less about the Word of God.

And maybe it's true in here too. Maybe you've got love for other things more than the book. You know, it's sad that a lot of churches have leaned toward this little, let's get together with our little groups, or let's get together and meet in houses and sit around the circle of the couches and the chairs and let's talk about what we feel about the Bible.

Let's talk about a topic and then we can all share with what we feel and think about it, how this relates to us. And hey, if you want to have Bible studies and sit in circles, do your thing. But don't ever let that stuff replace preaching and teaching in the local church.

Don't ever let that happen. God help us never here to let that happen, to where we turn away from studying the Word of God and learning what the Scriptures say. I want to ask you a question.

[ 27 : 17 ] What do you think this book was given to you for? Not to the world, to you. Like, you have a copy, right? Why do you think you have a copy? Or what's the purpose of that book in your life?

You might not even, I don't know if it even has a purpose in my life. It's just a religious book. I hope that's a worst case answer. What does that Bible mean to you?

What does this book mean to you? Is there any precious words in this book that are in your heart? Because the words of this book has like, I don't know how to say this.

I don't even know how I can convey this. But has knit your heart with God's heart. Because there's some words in this book that are special and meaningful and relevant to you.

Is that even talking over your head? Do you have a verse? Do you have something special to you that you got from the book? Where God spoke to your heart personally, individually?

[ 28 : 21 ] A relationship with God from the Bible? Do you think this book's just to be read on Sundays? But then Monday through Saturday is the rest of it?

The politics and the sports and the play and the entertainment and the work and the money. Is this just a Sunday book? You know the men died for this book.

Men and women died and were burned alive for this book. Or there's some company. There's some company that's very high.

This Bible's not a casual read. It's God's truth. And it's made plain for us to guide us and govern our lives. You ought to be a student of the scriptures.

I like to consider myself a student of the scriptures. I don't consider myself a scholar by any means. But a student. I'll sit under this book. I love to learn of this book.

[ 29 : 17 ] I love to study this book. I love to come across something and not sure what it means and pray about it and search it and study it. And then have a thought and run it by somebody and see what they think about it.

And I got a pastor called me just last week. And he said, hey, or two of them did, really, to tell you the truth. One of them asked me something I had no idea. I couldn't answer him at all. Just over my head.



But there's another guy who asked something. And I was like, brother, I am with you on that. I've been studying that for like the last five to ten years and thinking about that myself. And we talked for almost two hours about this Bible topic.

And we just were trying to sharpen each other on this doctrine, whether it was so or not. And trying to cut it down and seeing if it wasn't. And just studying the book. Don't greatly err because you don't know the scriptures, church.

Follow Christ by being a student of Jesus Christ. That's what a disciple is. And so thirdly, let's go somewhere else. Let's go to 1 Peter chapter 2. And I'm going to be in 2 Corinthians 11 as well in a moment.

[ 30 : 25 ] If you want to get there early, go ahead. 1 Peter 2 right now. 2 Corinthians 11 in a moment. Paul says, Be ye followers of me, even I also am of Christ.

And Paul followed Christ by surrendering right away. And Paul followed Christ by studying and being a student of the Lord Jesus Christ. And learning long before he was preaching.

And then there's one more. And this was a big one. This was a big one for the rest of his ministry. Is that Paul followed Christ by suffering. I want to use the words of Peter here.

Because he lays it out really well here. 1 Peter 2 verse 21. He says, and he's speaking of suffering from the previous verses. In verses 19 and 20.

But in verse 21 he says, For even here unto were ye called. Because Christ also suffered for us. Leaving us an example. That ye should follow his steps.

[ 31 : 34 ] Talk about following Christ. Peter makes it plain. A way to follow Christ is to suffer. For Christ. As he suffered for us.

Now that's not a pretty thought. I get it. It's not an attractive calling. It surely isn't attractive. But boy is it something that Jesus Christ did for you. Flip back to 2 Corinthians now.

If you already got that. 2 Corinthians 11. And let's just skim through this. This is that passage of all these perils that Paul was in. While he was ministering the gospel.

He said in Galatians 6. That I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He described in Acts chapter 16.

Luke wrote the story. How he and Silas. When they had laid many stripes upon them. And cast them into prison. And then they put their feet in the stocks.

[ 32 : 30 ] That's the apostle Paul. We didn't look at it in Philippians 3. But he talks about knowing Christ. And the fellowship of his sufferings. It was a real part of his life.

In his surrender to Jesus Christ. So here we are in 2 Corinthians 11. We'll just begin in verse number 23. He says, Are they ministers of Christ?

I speak as a fool. I am more. And labors more abundant. And stripes above measure. It means you can't count them. The stripes that he got on his back.

In prisons more frequent. In deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes. Save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned.

Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I've been in the deep. In journeyings often. In perils of waters. In perils of robbers. In perils of my own countrymen.

[ 33 : 25 ] In perils by the heathen. In perils in the city. In perils in the wilderness. In perils in the sea. In perils among false brethren. In weariness. In painfulness.

In watchings often. In hunger and thirst. In fastings often. In cold and nakedness. Beside those things which are without. That which cometh upon me daily. The care of all the churches.

If Paul is in perils of his own countrymen. And the heathen. That's the Jews and the Gentiles. They're all after him. He's in perils in the city.

And he's in perils in the wilderness. And he's in perils in the sea. He's in perils. That's everywhere as well. He couldn't escape it. And that's the calling. And so Jesus Christ suffered for us.

And he calls us to be followers of him. And Paul says. Hey follow me. I'm following Christ. And following Christ means. Suffering for Christ. Should Jesus Christ have to suffer alone?

[ 34 : 26 ] So the hymn writer writes the song. Must Jesus bear the cross alone. And all the world go free? Does that sound fair to you? Does that sound right?

Does that sound just? That he should pay for your sins. And then you just go free. But the song says. No there's a cross for everyone.

And there's a cross for me. And so Jesus Christ likens the Christian life. To bearing a cross. He said. If any man will come after me. Let him deny himself.

And take up his cross. And follow me. And suffering is. It's built into a life that's lived for Jesus Christ.

Peter talked about a fiery trial. Which is to try you. And he talks about it. Says it's a good thing. You can rejoice when that happens. Because you're a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. And he says.

[ 35 : 23 ] If you're reproached for the name of Christ. Happy are ye. It's all good. But I wonder if that sits well with you tonight. Are you okay with that?

Where you sit tonight. Are you okay with that? Saying Lord. If you want me to suffer for you. I'm willing to suffer for you. Lord. If you want me to go through something. And endure it for you. I'll do it.

If it's sickness. If it's a peril of my own countrymen. Any perils. If it's imprisonment. Whatever it is. Lord. I'm willing. To do it for you.

Another thing that these modern Christians. Doesn't want anything to do with. Especially Americans. They want comfort. They don't want suffering. Christ said that the world would hate you.

Don't be surprised. It hates me. It's going to hate you. We're always warned in the scriptures. To expect opposition. We're never told that. That we'll have cooperation.

[ 36 : 22 ] Of the ungodly. We're not told that the government's going to help us. For the cause of Christ. But what you can expect instead is. Suffering. And while you endure it.

You can expect the grace of God. To hold you up. And you can expect his mercies. To be new every morning. And you can expect his peace. That passeth all understanding. To keep your heart and mind.

Through Christ Jesus. You can expect God. To put joy in your heart. That can't be taken away. Joy unspeakable. Joy unspeakable. And so Paul says.

I'm a follower of Christ. That's what I am. I'm not just a believer. I'm not just a child of God. But I'm a follower of Christ. And then he commands us.

Be ye followers of me. So. Are you following Christ tonight? Have you surrendered yourself? Have you surrendered your life?

[ 37 : 19 ] Have you laid some things down? Have you severed some relationships? Let me throw this little warning out to you. If you've got some bad relationships in your life. Some things that are not of the Lord.

I can tell you. I can promise you this. When Jesus Christ calls. And when he moves in your heart to follow him. You're going to have a hard time letting go. It's a good reason why you just don't get unequally yoked up with unbelievers.

Because it's hard to let go of relationships that aren't healthy for you. If you've got relationships in Christ. Where they're following Christ. It's easy. To follow Christ. When he calls.

It's hard. To let go of some other things. Especially people and friends. Are you a follower of Christ by studying?

Are you committed to learning the word of God? Are you content with your scripture knowledge? You feel like I know all that. I've been around it all my life. I'm familiar with the stories enough.

[ 38 : 20 ] I could turn to the verse if you called for it. Is that enough? Is God pricking your heart to study more? To spend more time in his word?

To grow in your understanding of truth? To be ready always to give an answer? With the Bible verse? Could you right now preach the gospel to somebody that's lost from the Bible?

Are you a follower of Christ by suffering? Christian, don't be ashamed of Jesus Christ. Don't be afraid to get the taste of what it's like to stick your neck out for him.

And to bear his reproach. And to learn of him. To learn what that's like. It may not feel good. But inside it'll bring to life a new man.

A rejoicing of suffering for him. You remember what? If you're so scared of it. And I don't. You know. We don't want to go to jail. Nobody wants to get beat up for Jesus Christ. But when you are put in a spot where you're ashamed of Christ.

[ 39 : 23 ] Look at the examples in the Bible again. Those guys that got beat and thrown in jail. Do you know what they did? They rejoiced. And they were singing praises unto God. It wasn't because they were dejected and felt like losers.

It's because the other time they left. When they got released from getting beat up. They rejoiced that they were kind of unworthy to suffer shame for his name. And you won't know that rejoicing until you suffer.

Until you suffer that reproach. And when you feel that suffering. And you take that instinctively with it comes the rejoicing. And you'll know that I just pleased him.

And in pleasing him it thrills you on the inside. You can't put it inside of you. You have to suffer to get that feeling. And that feeling to the Apostle Paul was probably a little addicting.

Because he just he got stoned to death. And just God raised him up. He went right back into the city. It must have felt pretty good. On the outside the outward man perished.

[ 40 : 25 ] But the inward man is renewed. And that's a blessing in that church. So Paul's a follower of Christ. My question are you a follower of Christ?

Are you following Paul? He laid out that example. I feel like there's more in here that we could cover on following Paul. I mean most of his writings are about doing what he tells us to do. And I don't know if I'll try to revisit this and make it a part two on this.

I think next Wednesday night we'll have a missions night. I'd like to not get away from that too far. So for now we'll stop with this thought right there of surrender and suffering. Surrendering, studying and suffering.

Just like Paul did. We can be followers of Paul. Because he was a follower of Christ. So let's be dismissed with a word of prayer. And we can be on our way.

Lord we are grateful for this example in the Bible. Thank you for our authority. Thank you for the Apostle Paul and his willingness to go all out. And to leave that example for us.

[ 41 : 25 ] To follow in his steps. Help us God not to be cowards. Help us not to be afraid. Give us Lord the spirit of faith. Give us courage and boldness.

And Lord give us conviction to stand up for Jesus Christ. And pray Lord that when the day comes that each one of us are at the end of our lives. That we could echo the words of the Apostle Paul.

That we finished our course. That we were fighters for the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord we love you. Thank you for the word of God. Thank you for each of my brothers and sisters here tonight.

Please bless. Bring us together again this weekend we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. You're dismissed.